
U.S. Representative

John Spratt

South Carolina ■ 5th District

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Legislation would benefit Winthrop University

Women's Colleges Bill Clears House

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House of Representatives today passed and sent to the Senate a bill sponsored by Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) to authorize funds for the preservation of buildings at Winthrop University and six other historically women's colleges and universities.

"Winthrop was a pioneer in the education of women," said Spratt, "and many of the women Winthrop educated became teachers, and in turn, educated generations of South Carolinians, including me. They raised the plane of public education all over South Carolina. Yet Winthrop and other women's colleges were never funded on parity with state universities like Carolina and Clemson. In a small way, this bill helps make up for that."

The bill, H.R. 4503, the *Historic Women's Colleges & Universities Building Preservation Act*, applies to seven schools founded between 1884 and 1908. They were designed originally to prepare teachers and provide vocational education for women who, at the time, could not attend other state institutions. All of the schools are now coeducational, but they retain historical and academic vestiges from their days as women's colleges. All have historic buildings in need of restoration.

The bill authorizes \$14 million for each of fiscal years 2001-2005 from the National Historic Preservation Fund, with the funds being subject to a 50% non-federal matching requirement. "Appropriating the money," said Spratt, "is the next step. The check is not in the mail yet, but this bill is moving, and this is an important step forward."

Spratt said if the bill is enacted and fully funded, Winthrop and the other schools could receive up to \$2 million in federal funds every year from 2001-2005.

In addition to Winthrop, the schools named by the bill are the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC; Georgia College and State University, Milledgeville, GA; the University of Montevallo, Montevallo, AL; Mississippi University for Women, Columbus, MS; Texas Women's University, Denton, TX; and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, Chickasha, OK.

"I would like to think that Congress could complete the bill this year," said Spratt. "But this session is winding down, and bills like this usually take time to gather support. The bill can easily be reintroduced next year if it does not pass this year. Seven states have a stake in this bill, and we will keep pushing to get this bill through Congress."

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